

Fairfax Area Disability Services Board (FA-DSB)
May 9, 2016 Meeting Minutes
12000 Government Center Parkway, Conference Rooms 4/5

FA-DSB Members in Attendance:

Tapan Banerjee, Chair, Dranesville District
Linda Collins, Braddock District
Alexandra Dixon, At Large
Harriet Epstein, Secretary, Providence District
Chester Freedenthal, Lee District
Tim Lavelle, At-Large
Michele "Cookie" Hymer Blitz, Hunter Mill District
Leeann Alberts, Vice Chair, At-Large
Deborah Hammer, Mt. Vernon District

FA-DSB Members Excused from the Meeting:

Mark Farage, City of Fairfax
Donald Kissinger, Jr., Springfield District

Others Present: Matthew Barkley-Fairfax County Department of Family Services' Disability Services Planning and Development; Tom Bash-Springfield District representative on the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging; Ursula Kiel-Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management; Robert Galt and Kate Loftur-Thun-Fairfax area residents interested in joining the Fairfax Area Disability Service Board.

Minutes and Agenda: The May agenda and the March minutes were both adopted unanimously.

Public Comment: Tom Bash reviewed his Lines of Business position on why Fairfax County should invest in a Pre-Notification 911 system and expressed doubt that the 15,000 people identified with a functional need on Fairfax Alerts will truly be any safer during an emergency without it. He went on to say that countywide emergencies are relatively rare, but Fairfax County receives more than a million 911 calls each year. Currently, Fairfax Alerts functional needs registry is not connected with the 911 emergency system. Pre Notification 911 would provide enhanced safety readiness for people with disabilities in personal and widespread emergencies.

Universal Design Demonstration Home: Matthew Barkley shared information about an upcoming opportunity to visit a demonstration home with universal design features, which make environments more welcoming and easier for everyone to use, including people with disabilities. Linda Collins asked how much of the home is funded by Fairfax County Public Schools, and how much is supported by the Foundation for Applied Technical Education, the non-profit that sponsors the project. Tapan Banerjee said that this is a good opportunity to encourage more builders to include universal design features in the homes they build.

FA-DSB Strategic Planning and Proposed Community Forums: Tapan Banerjee distributed a proposal for the FA-DSB to host a series of community forums to more directly connect board members with the people with physical and sensory disabilities they serve to develop a more effective strategic action plan for FY 2017. The forums will be held at various public locations and partnering agencies serving people with a variety of disabilities throughout the county. At least two FA-DSB members would be needed for each forum, and support staff will help facilitate the discussion. Having received unanimous approval during the March 2016 FA-DSB meeting, the board members reviewed and approved the proposed agenda for each forum, indicated which forums they are able to attend, and agreed to initiate public promotion of the forums immediately.

Committee Reports:

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** Chester Freedenthal gave a presentation to the board about the importance of website accessibility for people with disabilities, including the various laws involved in oversight of online compliance. He discussed how the U.S. Department of Justice recently ruled that all

websites offering goods and services to the public fall under Title III, the Public Facilities provisions of the ADA, and will therefore soon be held to higher accessibility standards similar to what is required by federal, state and local governments. Chester offered to bring technical examples pertaining to website accessibility to a future meeting. The FA-DSB found the presentation very informative and agreed to elaborate on the topic further during an upcoming meeting.

- **Emergency Preparedness:** Harriet Epstein reported that the committee met before the full FA-DSB meeting to discuss Fairfax Alerts, the Medical Needs Registry and the gaps that prevent people with disabilities from being adequately served in an emergency. The committee is also reviewing how “Pre-Notification 911” could be beneficial during an emergency, and clarified that OEM is focused on getting information out to groups of people before, during and after an emergency, while public safety is focused on immediate response to individual emergencies when people call 911. Currently there is no connection between Fairfax County’s 911 system, and people who self-identify as having a “functional need” on Fairfax Alerts. Harriet also indicated that the county isn’t able to make changes to Fairfax Alerts because it is a universal system owned by Everbridge. A number of FA-DSB members were especially troubled by this information because they wanted assurance that the private information people share while registering for Fairfax Alerts is owned exclusively by Fairfax County, and not by Everbridge.

Ursula Kiel from OEM clarified that self-identifying as having a functional need is part of the Fairfax Alerts registration process. She said that it would be beneficial for OEM and the FA-DSB to collaborate on a campaign to promote the importance of registering for Fairfax Alerts to keep people with disabilities informed and to make sure that they are prepared for an emergency. Alexandra Dixon wanted assurance that by registering for Fairfax Alerts with a functional need, people would be contacted by the county and OEM would ensure that people with disabilities are adequately supported during an emergency.

The board agreed to have additional representatives from OEM come to a future FA-DSB meeting to clarify these issues with them. Tapan suggested taking definitive positions on these items ahead of time and presenting questions to OEM in advance so they come to the meeting prepared to respond to them.

- **Housing:** Michele ‘Cookie’ Hymer Blitz gave an overview of the Department of Housing and Community Development’s Housing Choice Voucher rental subsidy program. The Housing Choice Voucher waiting list has been closed for nine years, but will re-open for a two week period at the end of 2016. A lottery system will be implemented since demand will be so high, but priority should be given to people with disabilities. Cookie expressed concern that the only way to register for the waiting list is by using a computer, and stressed the importance of letting people with disabilities know about this opportunity when it arrives.
- **Mobility and Transportation (M&T) Committee:** Doris Ray reported that Fairfax County’s new bus stop coordinator updated the committee on the status of the accessible bus stop inventory, and discussed the ways that bus stops are prioritized for accessibility modifications. Deborah Hammer expressed frustration over her inability to rent a wheelchair equipped van through the major national rental car companies, and Alexandra Dixon clarified that they are only required to provide hand controls.

Chair’s Items: Tapan Banerjee asked for a speaker to come to an upcoming FA-DSB meeting to talk about resources that are available for people with disabilities who are in need of home modifications for accessibility. Linda Collins presented the Nominations Committee’s slate for the FY 2017 Executive Committee. The FY 2017 nominees are: Chair-Tapan Banerjee, Dranesville District; Vice Chair- Leeann Alberts, At Large; and Secretary- Harriet Epstein, Providence District. The nominees will be voted on in June, and will take effect July 1, 2016.

Member and Staff Reports:

- Matthew Barkley distributed print and brailled business cards to the FA-DSB members.

Adjournment: 9:00 p.m.